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ABSTRACT

The first of a series of three books written for parents, professionals, and others involved in educating severely and profoundly retarded children provides a brief history of the right to education movement and general information about administration and financing of public schools. Chapter 1 traces the right to education movement from the early 1800s to the present. Chapter 2, on the public schools, includes sections on the local school and school district, the state education agency, the federal government's role in education, university teacher training programs and the educational system, and the role of teacher unions. (SBH)

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BOOK

1

THE PARENT/PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP:

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION:

WHERE ARE WE AND HOW DID WE GET HERE?

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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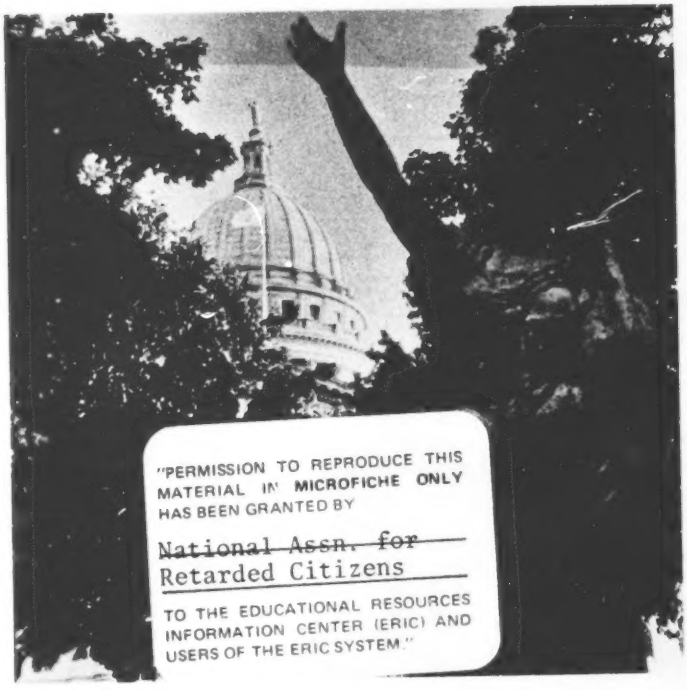
National Association for Retarded Citizens
NARC Research and Demonstration Institute

September, 1977



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James S. Payne, Ed.D., Chairman
Victor L. Baldwin, Ed.D.
Lou Brown, Ph.D.
Norris Haring, Ed.D.
Eva Johnson, Ph.D.
Edward Meyen, Ph.D.
James W. Tawney, Ph.D.
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Frank J. Menolascino, M.D., President, NARC
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Robert E. Luckey, Ph.D., Consultant, Program Services

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Catherine Payne Moore
Project Coordinator
NARC Parent/Professional Training Project

Kay Evans Wilde
Public Information Specialist
NARC Parent/Professional Training Project

Brian M. McCann, Ph.D.
Project Director
Director, NARC Research & Demonstration Institute

Preface

Many attempts have been made to define what mental retardation is, but the most widely accepted definition today is that of the American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD). It was adopted by the Organization in 1973, and it states:

"Mental retardation refers to significant subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period."

If some of these terms are unfamiliar to you, they can be explained as follows:

SUB-AVERAGE GENERAL INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING: Falling below 97% of the population on standardized tests of global intelligence (tests which attempt to measure vocabulary, comprehension, memory, reasoning, judgement and visual-motor functions).

ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR: The ability to adapt to and control one's environment, usually defined in terms of maturation, learning and social skills.

DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD: The period from conception to about 16 years of age.

Since there are varying degrees of mental retardation, experts have tried to classify them into several different levels. One system of classification divides the degrees of mental retardation into three classes: educable, trainable and sub-trainable. This system of classification has been used in the field of education for some time. However, there are some negative aspects to it. When a person is classified "sub-trainable," the label implies that this individual may be so retarded that he can't learn. This is a misconception because *everyone* has the capacity to learn. Some just learn more quickly than others.

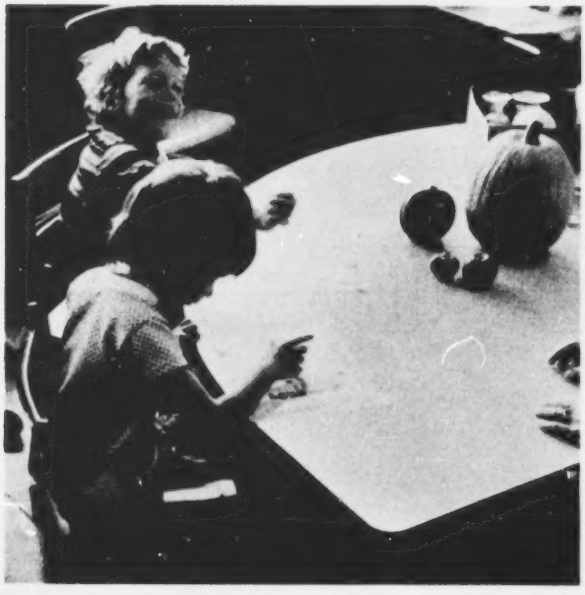
Another classification system that is more widely accepted and does not have negative connotations is the following:

Mild: Mildly retarded individuals make up about 89 percent of all mentally retarded people. With proper education and training, they can function independently in society with only occasional assistance in social, financial and legal matters.

Moderate: Moderately retarded individuals represent about 6 percent of all mentally retarded people. Their mental handicap is usually detected by the time they reach school age. With special education and training these people can usually learn to live semi-independently in the community in group homes or supervised apartments. Some may be able to compete in the labor market, while others will be more successful in sheltered employment.

Severe: Only about 3-1/2 percent of all mentally retarded persons are severely retarded. These people are capable of learning how to take care of their daily needs like eating, dressing, bathing, toileting, grooming, and personal hygiene. With special training, most of them can work productively in supervised settings. Some are residents in public and private institutions and others live at home or in community-based residences.

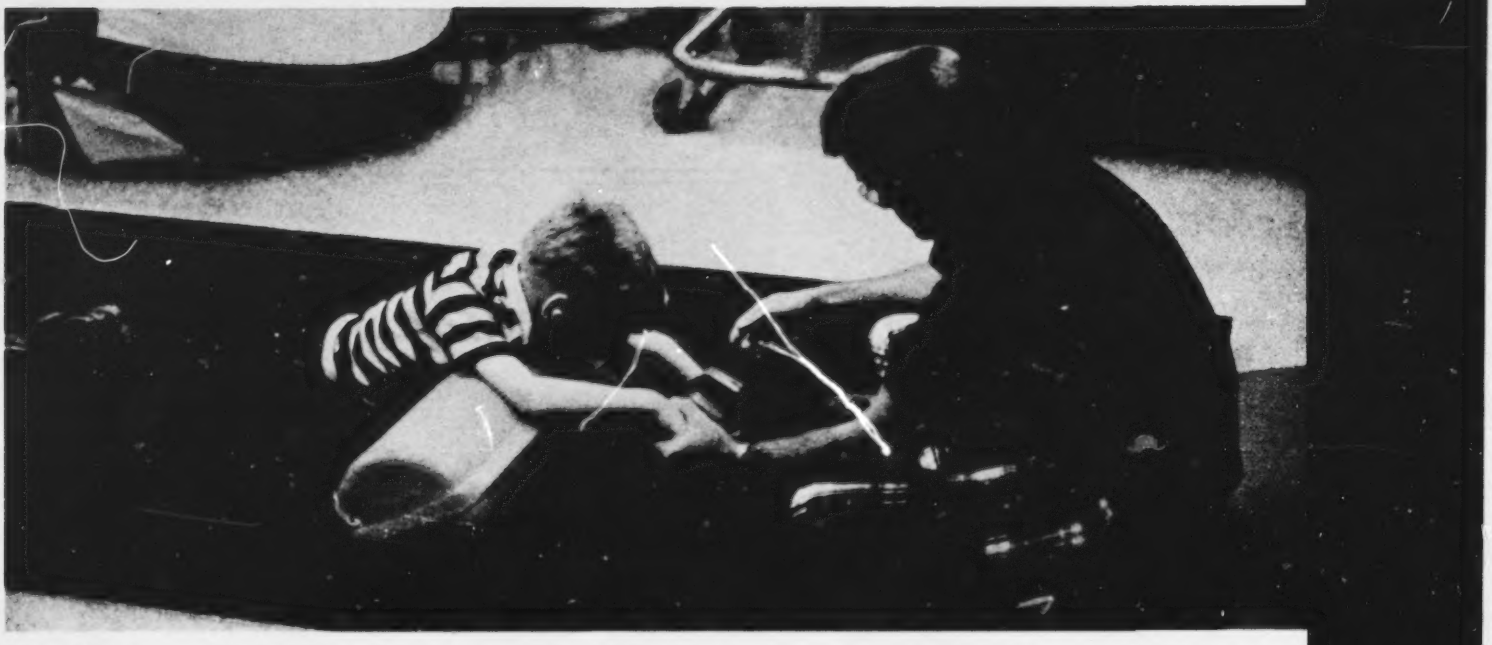
Profound: Profoundly retarded individuals constitute only about 1-1/2 percent of all mentally retarded people. Most of these people are capable of learning self-help skills when given highly specialized training. The earlier this training is introduced in the lives of these people, the more successful their development will be. Profoundly retarded individuals are sometimes capable of doing work in a sheltered environment. They live in institutions, at home or in supervised group-home settings.



Severely and profoundly retarded children are for the first time beginning to enroll in public schools across the country. Research has proven that these children, with proper instruction and support, are capable of learning skills and knowledge. Now they are finally going to have the opportunity to receive the help they need to develop to their full potentials. At least they *may* begin receiving it, *if* their parents, teachers and friends are prepared to work together to give it. Severely and profoundly retarded children cannot be expected to progress, if they only receive instruction from the school. Training must be carried into the home environment as well. Cooperative partnerships need to be formed between parents and professionals in order to educate severely handicapped students.

The Parent/Professional Partnership, a series of three books, was written for parents, professionals and friends who are involved in educating severely and profoundly retarded children. Hopefully, by reading the information included in this series, they can learn what they need to know to form more cooperative working relationships.

The first book, *The Right to Education: Where Are We and How Did We Get Here?*, provides a brief history of the right to education movement and general information about administration and financing of public schools. The second book, *Classroom Programming: What Should Be Taught?*, offers detailed information regarding educational programming in the public schools. The third book, *The Partnership: How To Make It Work*, presents some obstacles to productive parent/professional partnerships, and offers suggestions for establishing cooperative working relationships.



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Chapter

1

RIGHT TO EDUCATION: Where are we, and how did we get here?*

The idea of educating mentally retarded people is a relatively new one. From the early beginnings of human history until approximately the nineteenth century, mentally retarded individuals were exterminated, treated as sub-human, sterilized or at best, isolated from society. Generally, they were the victims of ridicule and extreme cruelty.

There were always a few exceptions to this rule, of course. For instance, in some countries, it was not unusual for wealthy people or royalty to keep jesters in their homes for amusement. However, only a few mentally retarded people were fortunate enough to hold this position in a prosperous household. Handicapped persons were not totally without friends. In the fourth century, Saint Nicholas Thaumaturgos, Bishop of Myra, was regarded as an advocate for mentally retarded individuals. (Later Saint Nicholas became the prototype of Santa Claus.) Throughout history though, education was never "wasted" on mentally retarded people, even if they were fortunate enough to have an advocate or benefactor.

Possibly one of the first significant efforts to educate a mentally retarded person was made by the French physician Itard, in the early 1800's. Itard tried to train a young "wild boy," Victor, who had been captured in the Caune woods. Itard worked with Victor for five years, believing that the boy had been mentally retarded through social isolation rather than heredity (the popular belief of the time was that mental retardation was hereditary and could not be treated). Although Itard felt he had failed in his goal of transforming the wild boy into a civilized, social individual, the French Academy of Science applauded him. They recognized that Itard had made some remarkable changes with the boy, who was initially mute, walked on all fours, and bit and scratched everyone who got in his way.

The work of Itard did not end with his death in 1838. One of his students, Edouard Onesimus Seguin, continued to carry on Itard's study of the education and treatment of mentally retarded individuals. Seguin was successful in his work, which brought him world-wide fame. He is credited for the first successfully established training school for mentally retarded individuals, which was founded in Paris in 1837. Some of his training techniques are still practiced today in modified forms.

While Seguin was working in France, a physician named Guggenbuhl was doing similar things in Switzerland. He believed as Seguin did, that mentally retarded people could be educated. He further determined that a systematic approach to health and education for these people should be conducted in an appropriate setting. So, he established a residential

*Much of the material in this chapter was abstracted from: Billy R. White, "A Proposed Model of Organization and Administration for Residential Facilities for the Mentally Retarded," (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia at Charlottesville, 1976).

facility on the Abendberg (a mountain in Switzerland) in the mid-1840's. It consisted of small cottages and a central structure. Within the central structure were a large assembly hall, playroom, and bathrooms. One other building was used as a place to train prospective teachers and attendants. The main purpose of Abendberg was to train mentally retarded people in how to lead productive lives. Abendberg and Guggenbuhl became famous throughout the world (although later Abendberg deteriorated as an institution).

Education for mentally retarded persons was slow in coming to the United States. During the early colonial times, public facilities (including fire departments, schools, and even prisons) of any type were a rarity. Each family was expected to take care of its own disabled members. Occasionally, a community might give aid to a family in need.

In the eighteenth century, a few hospitals were established to accommodate the mentally handicapped and the sick. Generally though, mentally retarded people were considered to be in the same class as vagabonds, rogues, beggars, drunkards, fortune tellers, runaways and other misfits. They were placed in houses of correction whenever feasible.

Just as in Europe, humanitarian views and actions towards mental retardation did not really blossom in America until the nineteenth century. In 1845, directors of institutions for the mentally ill in the states of New York and Massachusetts expressed the need for special schools and facilities for mentally retarded people. In April of 1846, Dr. Samuel G. Howe, Director of the Perkins Institute and Massachusetts School for the Blind, was appointed by the court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to head a special commission. The task of the commission was to study the living conditions of mentally retarded individuals in Massachusetts and determine if anything could be done for them.

After two years, the commissioners submitted their report, and the first institution for mentally retarded people in the United States was opened on October 1, 1848. It was an experimental school where ten mentally retarded children were placed under the guidance of James J. Richards, a teacher. Classes were held in a wing of Perkins Institute.

After three years, the Massachusetts Legislature decided that the school was successful enough to pass a law that incorporated Howe's school. It was named the Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feebleminded Youth. The establishment of this school was important for two reasons. First, it indicated a belief that mentally retarded individuals could be trained and educated. Secondly, it reinforced the idea that education of all children was a public responsibility.

In 1850, Seguin emigrated to the states because the political climate in France was not acceptable to him. During the first few months after his arrival, he assisted Samuel Howe in organizing the Massachusetts School for the Feebleminded. Seguin also helped establish many of the training facilities for mentally retarded people in several other states. It wasn't long before such educational facilities grew in number throughout America.

Following is a testimony made by Samuel Howe in 1851* which describes the successful training of a student in one of these facilities:

> "S. J. W., six years old when admitted in October, 1848. He was a pitiful sight to behold. He could not stand or even sit erect. He had no command of his limbs, not even so much as an infant of three months, for it can work its arms

*M. Rosen, G. R. Clark, & M. S. Kivitz (Ed.), The History of Mental Retardation: Collected Papers, (Baltimore, Maryland: University Park Press, 1976), 1.

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and kick its legs vigorously; this poor boy, however, could do neither, but lay almost like a jellyfish, as though his body were a mass of flesh without any bones in it. He could not even chew solid food, but subsisted on milk, of which he drank large quantities. The utmost he could do, in the way of motion, was to prop up his head with one hand, and move the other feebly about. He seemed to hear, but his eyes were dull and his other senses quite inactive. He drivelled at the mouth, and his habits were, in all respects, like those of an infant. He was speechless, neither using nor understanding language, though he made several sounds which seemed to be a feeble imitation of words.

The mode of treatment adopted was this: he was bathed daily in cold water; his limbs were rubbed; he was dragged about in the open air, in a little wagon, by the other boys; his muscles were exercised; he was made to grasp with his hands, and gradually to raise himself up by them; he was held up and made to bear a little weight on his lower limbs; then a little more, until at last, to his great delight, he was able to go about alone, by holding on the wall, or to one's finger; even to go up stairs, by clinging to the balusters.

During the second year he has continued to improve. He is now decent in all his habits, and tidy in his appearance; his countenance is bright and pleasing; he can sit at the table and feed himself with a knife and fork; and though he does not venture to go alone, his limbs not being quite strong enough, he can almost do it, and he walks about by holding on to one's finger; all his senses have improved greatly, and he is so changed, generally, that he could hardly be recognized as the same being who, two years ago, incapable of sitting at a desk, used to lie upon a mattress in the school-room."

The first institutions were viewed by their founders as schools, not asylums. There were no provisions in the schools for permanent custody of students. The ultimate goal was to help the mentally retarded individual become as self-sufficient as possible and return to the community. Howe stressed the teaching of self-help skills and appropriate social behavior. The state of Kentucky went as far as to develop a vocational education and training program, which placed students in the school environment in the morning and in a job setting in the afternoon.

When considering the positive educational philosophies that early institutions were founded on, it makes one wonder as to what happened? Why did institutions for mentally retarded people evolve into the human warehouses that haunt us even today? Historians give several reasons. One is that the early founders tended to exaggerate their successes to the public, claiming to "cure" rather than habilitate their students. The schools were improving the lives of students, but were certainly not "curing" them of mental retardation. And, of course, there were always some students that did not respond to the teaching techniques being practiced. When the public began to realize the truth, it became disenchanted. Even those in charge of the institutions began to change their attitudes about what could actually be done for mentally retarded individuals. From approximately 1870 to 1890, the role of institutions shifted from providing education to administering custodial care.

Another reason for the change in institutions was the eugenics movement. Basically, eugenics is the science of improving species through the control of hereditary factors in mating. Since it was generally believed that mental retardation was hereditary, proponents of eugenics believed that the human species could be improved by sterilizing mentally retarded people. Thinking naturally followed that not only should they be sterilized, but also kept away from people of normal intelligence. The effects of the eugenics scare are still being felt today. The following is a news story that was printed in a modern newspaper.*

> On June 25, 1876, General George Custer made his last stand at the battle of the Little Big Horn. Also on that day, Martha Nelson completed her first year in a mental institution. She is still there.
>
> Miss Nelson, who was 102 last June, has spent the last 97 years at Orient State Institution near here, formerly the Columbus State Institution for the Feeble-Minded.
>
> "She never had a chance," said Dr. A. Z. Soforenko, appointed two months ago as superintendent of the institution. He said she was probably a victim of "eugenic alarm," which he said was common in the late 1800's.
>
> "During that time it was believed if you moved feebleminded people out of a community and into an institution, it (feeble-mindedness) would never return to the community," Dr.

*New York Times, *September 25, 1973.*

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Soforenko said. "She apparently was trapped in that system. It is a wasted life."

"She is quite coherent for her age," he continued. "She has no relatives and has had no contact with anybody (on the outside) for the last 78 to 80 years."

Dr. Soforenko said he felt she would be better off staying at the institute.

"Frankly, I don't think it would serve Martha herself to be transferred," he said. "She has her cottage, has her routine and knows the staff."

By the beginning and through the first half of the twentieth century, certain characteristics, philosophies and practices in institutions became evident. To quote from one authority in the area:*

- "The number of institutions increased.
- "Institutions grew larger.
- "Institutions became custodial rather than educational.

*A. A. Baumeister & L. C. Butterfield (Ed.), Residential Facilities For The Mentally Retarded, (Chicago, Illinois: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970)

- "The medical model was widely adopted, with most institutions organized in terms of a "hospital" hierarchy. In fact, the trend was to label most institutions *hospitals*. At the same time, the notion that mental deficiency was incurable became the prevalent view. What was never there, could not be restored.
- "Institutions became self-sustaining and managed as economically as possible.
- "New institutions were constructed in rural areas to provide farming opportunities and to remove the defective as far as possible from the populace. (Apparently, the rule-of-thumb was one acre of land per inmate).
- "Inmates were completely segregated by sex, age, and ability level (and, in some states, by color).
- "Institutional architecture became very distinctive, with the emphasis on highly specialized and sturdy buildings. Large dormitories were the rule, constructed with the intention of economically housing as many residents as possible.
- "The number of professionals employed became generally inadequate to carry on meaningful treatment and rehabilitation programs. Moreover, quality of professional services was typically very poor relative to other types of exceptionality.
- "Increasing emphasis was placed on the legal aspects of commitment and release.
- "The residents were dehumanized, deprived of many legal rights, frequently subjected to physical and psychological abuse and personal indignity, and their welfare generally neglected."

As a result of research and new knowledge, the idea of permanent segregation of mentally retarded people was widely questioned by 1925. But no one knew of any good alternatives. Some mildly and moderately retarded children were placed in special education classes in public schools. *The number of these classes increased from 1915 to 1930.* However, when the Depression hit, the classes decreased due to economic pressures. Mildly retarded children either stayed at home or attended regular classes. The more severely retarded youngsters were placed in institutions.

After World War II, the status of special education was grim. There were little or no adequate services for mentally retarded people, and these conditions existed until the 1950's. Several things happened to change the status quo. In 1954, a highly significant court case came up called *Brown v. Topeka, Kansas*

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Board of Education. Its impact is still being felt in the fields of special and general education. Although it dealt specifically with racial segregation, it can be credited as touching off the movement concerned with the right of all citizens to an equal education.

Brown, along with other actions related to the rights of the individual, ushered in a new era in public education. Prior to this time, students were educated in public schools in order to benefit society as a whole. An individual's needs were secondary to society's. This role of the public school began to change after *Brown*. The individual began to be the focal point of public education. His needs began to take priority over society's.

During the late 1940's, parents of mentally retarded children began to organize in groups in various parts of the country. They wanted to do something about the lack of educational services for their children. In 1950, representatives of a number of these local organizations met in Minneapolis and formed the National Association of Parents and Friends of Retarded Children. By 1952, when the name of the Association was changed to the National Association for Retarded Children (NARC), the organization had 119 local member units. This expansion continued, and by 1955 NARC had 35,000 members and over 400 member units. By 1976, it had increased its size to 300,000 members comprising some 1,800 member units.

Through the early years of the organization, many local ARC groups were involved in establishing and operating special classes for retarded children. This reflected a lack of response from the public sector. Since the public schools and other public agencies were not providing for retarded children, the responsibility fell on the ARC's.

This trend continued until the sixties. It was then that special education was to receive a great boost. The election of President John F. Kennedy resulted in national attention being given to mentally retarded persons. In a message to Congress in 1963, Kennedy called for a "bold new approach" to the care of the mentally retarded that would aid in maximizing their ability to assume useful roles in society.

At this time, parents and other advocates of retarded persons increased their pressure on public agencies to provide needed services. In 1965, NARC officially adopted a position that reflected this philosophy. At that time it was resolved that every effort should be made to obtain a total program of services for all mentally retarded individuals. Of course, one of the most important of these services was education. NARC felt that the public should assume the responsibility of providing educational programs for *all* retarded children regardless of the severity of their retardation. In 1971, NARC published a document entitled *Policy Statements on the Education of Mentally Retarded Persons*, which specifically dealt with the critical problems in the area of education.

Increased pressure from such organizations as NARC, coupled with greater national visibility for the problems associated with mental retardation, began to attract the attention of the federal government. During the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, much progress was achieved at the federal level. Possibly of greatest significance to the education of mentally retarded students was the establishment of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH).

BEH was created by the Congress in 1967. This agency, located within the U.S. Office of Education, was charged with the important task of strengthening and coordinating activities on behalf of all handicapped school age children. Specifically, BEH's mission was to assist states, universities, agencies and organizations in meeting the educational needs of the nation's handicapped children. Through support from the Bureau, many of the advances in education of mentally retarded students were begun. Today, BEH is continuing to provide support to most of the teacher-training programs, to many of the innovative demon-

stration programs and to basic educational research programs. In addition, BEH is coordinating the distribution of funds to local school districts intended to help pay some of the excess cost of educating handicapped children.

Also during the sixties, an enormous investment was made in the study of etiology (or origins) of mental retardation and the development of treatments and techniques to lessen its effects. A major shift in philosophy was begun — from basic care to habilitative services.

Several court cases occurred, beginning in the sixties, which affected the education of mentally retarded children. In *Hobson v. Hansen* (1968), the federal court ruled that the Washington, D.C. public school system's educational placement decisions were illegal. This was because children were being placed in educational programs on the basis of standardized tests that discriminated against certain minority and income groups. As a result, many children were misclassified and placed in special education classes. Not only was this unjust to the children who had been mislabeled, but it was also detrimental to children who did belong in special education programs. For this practice placed normal children in the special education classes and left little space for students who really needed the special instruction.

Later a similar class action suit, *Diana v. State Board of Education* (1970), occurred in California. This case was concerned with the inappropriate classification and placement of Mexican-American children in special classes for mildly retarded children. An agreement was made in court that: (1) intelligence testing must be in the student's primary language; (2) minority children in special classes would be re-evaluated and removed when misclassified; (3) special attention would be given to misclassified children who needed help in catching up with other children in regular classrooms; and (4) the state would undertake the development of more appropriate tests.

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Another lawsuit, *Fred G. Wolf, et al. v. The Legislature of the State of Utah* (1969), dealt with the education of moderately retarded students. In this case, the judge ruled that mentally retarded children excluded from education and placed under the Department of Welfare be provided education as a part of the public education system. The judge stated that segregation of the children from the public school system had had a detrimental effect on them and their parents. These are his reasons for the ruling he made:

> "Today it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the right and opportunity of an education. . . . The policy of placing these children under the Department of Welfare and segregating them from the educational system can be and probably is usually interpreted as denoting their inferiority and not belonging affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation, even though perhaps well intentioned, under the apparent sanction of law and state authority has a tendency to retard the educational, emotional, and mental development of the children."

The court case which had the greatest impact on special education for mentally retarded students was *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children, et al. v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1971). In this case, parents of 13 retarded children sued the state of Pennsylvania, its agencies, and school district for failure to provide their children and other retarded children with a publicly supported education. The case was argued on the grounds that the state was in violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In October 1971, a consent agreement was reached; the court ordered the state to provide education to *all* mentally retarded children, including those living in institutions, within one year. Shortly thereafter, another landmark case, *Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia* (1971), affirmed and expanded the Pennsylvania decision by including all handicapped children. As a result of these and other cases, public schools can no longer exclude certain groups of children. Through judicial and other pressures the states are being forced to move from a position that makes special education services an educational "frill" into facing the real problems of how to make education for *all* a reality.

Included in these legislative and judicial mandates are clear statements made about the rights of parents in the educational process. Parent participation in the identification, assessment, program planning, monitoring and teaching processes are encouraged. Schools are required to make efforts to involve parents in all phases of education. While this is important for all children, it is particularly meaningful for severely and profoundly retarded children. If their education is to be complete, parents must take an active role in closely coordinating programming in the home with that in the school.

This means that the educational systems in this country are being forced to deal with such problems as:

- Developing appropriate identification and placement procedures which protect the rights of the child.
- Accepting the administrative responsibility for providing free education to all students, rather than delegating this responsibility to other public or private agencies.
- Providing the local schools with the funds, in excess of the amount required to educate non-handicapped children, necessary to implement education for all.
- Developing and supporting programs to recruit and train personnel needed to appropriately educate handicapped children.

Certain events are indicating a growing interest in special education for severely and profoundly retarded students. For example, in March, 1975, NARC, through a grant from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, held a national training meeting on the education of severely and profoundly retarded stu-

dents. The American Association for the Education of the Severely and Profoundly Handicapped was formed in 1974. The Bureau of Education for the Handicapped has cited as one of its top priorities the education of severely handicapped individuals.

Possibly the most important recent event affecting the education of severely handicapped children came with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, (P.L. 94-142). This act mandates that public schools throughout the country begin serving all handicapped children. It also clearly states that federal funds under this act should be first spent on children who are not currently receiving a public education.

What does the future hold for severely and profoundly retarded individuals? Technology is showing some promise. Computer terminals are now being developed that can be placed in the homes of parents and then be hooked up to a major education institution. The terminal can supply the parents with the information they need to work with their child in the home. Highly complex electronic communications systems are also being designed for retarded individuals who are physically unable to communicate by any other means.

Advances in the behavioral sciences are providing valuable information. The results of a variety of research and demonstration projects are indicating that severely handicapped individuals can learn to communicate, take care of some of their basic needs, and live a more productive life.

Early intervention projects are showing that the harsh effects of mental retardation can be minimized. If a child is given proper training early enough, he can overcome handicaps that were considered permanent in the past. Parents are being taught how to give their young retarded infants that proper training.

We are at a critical period and progress has begun. However, unless parents and educators increase their understanding and respect for each other and begin to work as a closely coordinated team, the work accomplished so far will not continue. The booklets in this series are aimed at giving both groups some of the skills and knowledge necessary to establish this positive working relationship.

Chapter

2

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS: Administration, Organization & Financing

To be an effective education advocate for handicapped children, you need to know some general information about how public schools are organized, administered and financed. With this knowledge, you can work within the system to achieve your goals. Most importantly, knowing who has the decision-making power in the public school system can save time and energy. There is no need to go through the maintenance man for a railing on the stairs, when the principal makes that kind of decision.

The Local School and School District

In the United States, the major responsibility for educating children has been delegated to the community. The state assists the community by offering support in the form of financial assistance, general guidelines, accreditation standards, etc. However, the term "independent" which is often contained in the name of a school district, is more descriptive than most people realize. It is at the local level that most critical decisions are made which affect the quality of every child's education — the hiring and firing of teachers, the final selection of text books and other teaching materials, the determination of who will actually attend classes and who will not.

What should you know about the Central Office?

Every individual in this country is familiar to some degree with the local school's administrative structure. This is the level of the public school system that most individuals are exposed to from childhood through adulthood. The formal structure of local schools varies tremendously across the country. Some are organized under a city system while others are included in county districts. This is because state education legislation or regulations determine administrative structures of local school districts. The varying sizes of communities also influences how school districts are structured. A rural school district, which serves only a few hundred students, will not have the same structure as a local school district in a large city, which may serve as many as several hundred thousand.

In most communities, the public school district is administered by an elected school board and a paid central office staff. The president of the school board presides over meetings of the school board. The superintendent of schools has the key role in directing the paid staff of the schools. These two individuals are, at least formally, the most influential people in the administration of a school district.

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Also in most schools, there is a person who has responsibility for the administration of the special education program. This person's title may be Special Education Director, Special Education Coordinator or Assistant Superintendent, depending on the school district. The special education director ordinarily operates out of the central office. He is usually directly responsible to the superintendent and has prime responsibility for coordinating all the special education services of the school district (teachers, any special transportation services required by the handicapped students, supervision of support personnel, purchases of needed special equipment or materials, etc.).

The special education director may have under him a person who is in charge of programs for the mentally retarded within the district. This person may be titled the Mental Retardation Coordinator for the Public Schools. It should be remembered that the special education director is in charge of not only programs for the mentally retarded, but all programs for exceptional children operated with the school district (e.g., emotionally disturbed, visually impaired, hearing impaired, etc.). In large school districts each of these areas has a coordinator.

You should keep in mind that it is important for you to understand the formal administrative structure of your school district if you are to be able to influence critical decisions regarding severely and profoundly mentally retarded students. Unfortunately, the general public does not necessarily share your concerns about the quality education for severely handicapped students. The average person is usually apathetic or unaware of your cause. You should also be cognizant of the fact that numerous interest groups compete for the attention of the school district's administration and the powers that be. For example, there may be a group interested in a strong consumer education program; or another group pushing drug abuse education. While these two are important, your cause needs strong advocates.

In order to make your cause known, you and others should join forces. The local ARC could be the focal point for an organized effort to influence important decisions made at the local school district level. The following is a summary of steps to use as guidelines* in your efforts:

The General Public

1. Flyers and fact sheets are effective ways of informing the general public. When using them, be sure to make them factual, to the point and well organized. Use simple, clear language.
2. Newspapers, television and radio are obvious media to exploit. Keep reporters informed regularly by mail and call them personally when critical problems arise. If you have a newsletter be sure that reporters are on the mailing list.

The School Board

1. Find out who the members of your local board of education are. You can get this information by contacting the administrative office of your school system.
2. Write each member of your school board expressing your interest in quality education for all students, including severely and profoundly retarded children.
3. Ask to be put on the mailing list to receive the agenda of each school board meeting. Attend these meetings. Ask to be heard on issues which pertain to special education. Be sure that when you request to be heard that your statements are well prepared and present real data and issues. (e.g., number of children needing services, examples of good educational programs, etc.)
4. Be sure to be present at meetings when budgets are reviewed. Take an active part in advocating for adequate financing of programs for handicapped children.

*Abstracted from: National Committee for Citizens in Education, Parents Organizing to Improve Schools, 1976.

5. Attend meetings and forums in which school board candidates are discussing their stands on educational issues. Ask questions of the candidates concerning the education of severely and profoundly retarded students.
6. Invite candidates to speak to your local ARC group.
7. Support candidates who are favorable to your cause with your vote and your time.
8. Try to get members of your ARC elected to the board.
9. Work continuously to keep your concerns before the members of the school board. Electing favorable members is only the first step.

The Central Office Staff

1. Find out who the superintendent of schools is in the district. Your group can request a meeting with him. In such a meeting, express your support of educational services for all children, including the severely handicapped.
2. Find out who the local director of special education is. Contact him to express your concern for the needs of severely handicapped children. Request a meeting to discuss the structure of the special education component of the school district.
   Find out from the director:
   a. Who hires and fires specific teachers? On what basis are those decisions made?
   b. How are teacher competencies evaluated? Who does the evaluation? Are parents ever asked to take part in the evaluation of teachers?
   c. Who is responsible for supporting and supervising the classroom teacher?
   d. What type of support and supervision are given to the teachers? Who selects curriculum content? Who can the teacher go to with specific problems? Who bridges the gap between the classroom and the central office?

Parents and all concerned citizens have the right to know how their schools are administered. Some of the information you may want can be obtained from the central office. Requests for any general information should be in writing. They should be sent to the superintendent with a copy to the president of the school board. Keep carbon copies of all correspondence in your files.

The central office should be able to supply you with an organizational chart of the school district. This chart will help you see how the special education component fits into the overall structure of the school system. Ask for specific names and job descriptions of persons in special education. If the information you receive is unclear, don't be afraid to ask questions about it. It is important that you learn who does what in the structure. This will help you in deciding who to contact with specific questions, and who deserves commendation when problems are resolved.

What is the administrative structure of the local school?

In most cases, each school building has a principal, who is administratively responsible for the students, teachers and building. It is the principal who deals with the day-to-day events of a school. In the case of special education classrooms, the structure may be somewhat different, with the classroom teacher being administratively under the supervision of a special education supervisor. In any instance, the principal is the person primarily responsible for what happens in a given building.

The quality of education a school provides can be greatly affected by the personality of its principal. If he is politically aggressive in requesting materials, good teachers, or building repairs from the school district's administration, then he will probably get what he needs. If a principal is apathetic or "doesn't want to make waves," then his school will probably operate on a minimum amount of supplies and funds.

Ideally, severely and profoundly retarded children are placed in schools which house non-

handicapped children of approximately the same age level. In this type of situation, the school principal administers programs for both groups of students. Many school principals in these settings have little or no training in special education. In schools where programs for severely handicapped children are new, the principal may not be aware of all the special needs of the severely or profoundly retarded child. Hopefully, in these cases the special education supervisor can make up for the principal's lack of knowledge. However, not all schools have special education supervisors.

A number of severely and profoundly retarded children will be educated in buildings which do not house non-handicapped students, at least for the immediate future. In the case of these isolated non-integrated buildings, the building principal is still the person who is administratively responsible for all that goes on within the building.

Parents of severely and profoundly retarded students should meet with the principal of their child's school early in the year. At the meeting, the parents should express their interest in maintaining an ongoing relationship between the principal and other staff members who have direct responsibility for their child's education. Parents should keep the tone of this meeting a friendly and cooperative one.

In addition to the principal, many school systems employ special education supervisors. One of their major functions is to help the special education teacher in devising the individual educational plans for the children in the classroom, administering the formal and informal assessments, selecting teaching techniques and materials, and generally, offering the type of supportive skills needed by the teacher. These persons act as a liaison to the special education central office staff.

Possibly the most important person within the local school district is the classroom teacher. He has the day-to-day responsibility of providing quality education for the severely or profoundly retarded child. In addition to the teacher, there are several other staff members at the local school who have extremely important roles in a student's educational program. Who these staff members are depends on the needs of the student. If a child has difficulty in controlling the motion of his hands, arms, head, tongue and mouth (small motor coordination), an occupational therapist works with the student on these problems. A child needs the instruction of a physical therapist when he has problems walking, balancing or positioning his body (large motor coordination). A speech therapist works with the child who has speech handicaps. None of the specialists mentioned so far work in isolation. They, along with the parents and teacher, form a team which works together to deal with the unique needs of the individual child.

The State Education Agency

Each state has a state education agency (SEA). It is responsible for seeing that state laws and regulations pertaining to education are carried out in the local school districts. SEA's are part of the executive (governor's) branch of state government.

In every agency there is a chief state school officer whose title may vary in each state. Three of the most common titles given him are State Superintendent, State Commissioner or State Director. The person who fills this position can be elected or appointed, depending on the laws of the state. He shares control over the state education agency with a State Board of Education. The members of the board are usually elected if the State Commissioner has been appointed. However, if he has been elected, the board members are typically appointed.

Most state education agencies have a component that deals specifically with special education on a state-wide basis. There is usually a director of this component who may or may not have consultants working for him. Generally, the number of consultants depends on such things as how many special education students are enrolled in schools within the state and the amount of money appropriated for special education in the state budget. If there are consultants, one of them is usually responsible for the area of mental retardation.

In order to find out more about the structure of your state education agency, write the State Commissioner/Director/Superintendent and ask for a summary of the SEA administrative structure, as well as names and titles of its staff members. (Addresses are listed at the end of Chapter 3, Book II.)

Since the state education agency is responsible for implementing state laws and regulations, it is important to know if laws discriminate against severely and profoundly retarded children. To determine this, obtain copies of the laws and review them. They can be obtained from the Office of the Governor, the state education agency or the administrative office of your local school district. As you review them, evaluate them in terms of the questions listed in NARC's *Monitoring the Right to Education*, (1976). A summary of the major things to look for in your evaluation follows:

Attendance

Some states may provide services for mentally retarded children in their statutes, but they may not require attendance. This allows for a loop hole that some local school districts may use to exclude mentally retarded children from services. As you review your state's laws, pay close attention to how they treat attendance. Does compulsory school attendance apply to *all* children who are school age?

Placement

How a child is classified and the kind of educational program he is placed in can affect his whole future. The knowledge of a child's parents as well as that of a team of highly skilled professionals should be used to decide the most beneficial program a child should be placed in. Without this kind of knowledge, many children can be incorrectly classified and ultimately receive an education that is irrelevant to their needs. Is the method for placing children in specific types of classes clearly specified? Are parents included in placement decisions?

Definitions

How the law defines handicapping conditions can determine whether or not mentally retarded children are entitled to a public education. Carefully scrutinize the various definitions used in the law to describe handicaps. Does the state include specific mention of severely and profoundly retarded students in their definition of handicapped children eligible for public school services?

Administration

Although the state education agency and public schools should be responsible for the education of mentally retarded children, some state laws still delegate that responsibility to agencies that are not capable of administering it appropriately. Is the state education agency required to oversee all educational programs for mentally retarded children, including those conducted in residential institutions and private facilities that receive state funds?

Early and Continuing Education

The earlier a mentally retarded child begins to receive special education, the easier it is for him to progress. Some states do not enroll a mentally retarded child in an educational program until he is around five or six years old. Many mentally retarded adults would benefit from continuing education after their formal schooling is over. Therefore, it would be most appropriate for mentally retarded students to be provided early and continuing education under the laws of every state. Does the state fund early and continuing educational programs for mentally retarded individuals?

Buildings, Materials and Transportation

Severely and profoundly retarded children sometimes have other handicaps in addition to mental retardation. They may have cerebral palsy, paralysis, blindness, deafness, etc. These handicaps may cause a child to need special facilities, transportation, and even equipment at school. Does the state make provisions for the funding of special facilities, materials and transportation when they are needed to educate severely handicapped children?

Personnel and Supportive Services

Special education teachers are no longer scarce. However, very few of these educators are qualified to work with severely and profoundly retarded students. Most states have no certification qualifications for teachers of these children. It is not an uncommon situation to find non-certified teachers working without proper supervision or supportive services (therapists, psychologists, etc.) in classes for severely handicapped children, children who need the help of the most highly qualified teacher to make any significant progress. Are teachers of severely handicapped students required to have at least the same qualifications as those who serve non-handicapped children? Are the qualifications clearly stated in the regulations?

Funding

Congressmen can pass excellent legislation concerning the education of handicapped children; but unless they pass appropriate bills to support it, it is meaningless. Does the state make provisions for adequate funding of all educational programs and services necessary for educating severely and profoundly retarded students?

Parent Involvement

What severely and profoundly retarded children learn at school must be reinforced at home to be of value. Parents need to know how to give this reinforcement. If Johnny is learning how to brush his teeth at school, his parents must work

with him at home on this skill. Since parents do have a substantial role in the training of their child, it is only natural that they be involved in the decisions made about him at school. Are parents, by law, included in any major decision making concerned with their child's education?

School Financing

The education of severely and profoundly retarded children is more expensive than that of non-handicapped students. The need for smaller teacher/student ratios and classes, teacher aides, special transportation, therapists, psychologists, and other resources increases the cost considerably. In the past, school districts have used this as an excuse for not educating severely handicapped children. They claimed that they didn't have the funds to accommodate the added expense. However, recent court cases like *Mills v. Board of Education* (1971) have declared that insufficient funds can no longer be used as a reason for excluding any child from the public schools.

Prior to these court cases, public schools already had special education programs for mildly and moderately retarded and many other handicapped children. These individuals also added some expense to a local school district's budget. To offset these extra costs, states established various methods for supplementing local funds for special education programs. Most of the state financial aid was given in the form of one of these six general formulas: (a) unit, (b) percentage, (c) weight, (d) personnel, (e) straight sum, or (f) excess cost.* It is almost certain that states will employ these same formulas to determine financial aid for educational programs for severely and profoundly retarded children. Therefore, it is important to understand how they work, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

Unit Financing

Under this formula, *school districts are reimbursed a fixed sum by the state for each special education class or unit (this includes the cost of the teacher, administration, and transportation)*. There are several problems with this kind of financing. Some states that use it put a ceiling on the amount of annual growth that can occur in special education programs. This limits the number of new classes that can be approved each year. In the area of education for severely and profoundly retarded students, this could be a major problem since few of these classes currently exist.

In addition, many school districts tend to increase the size of special education classes in order to decrease the cost per pupil. In other words, they may put too many children in a class because the state reimburses only for a given number of teachers and not for the number of students enrolled.

Since the classes are often based on the number of children in the average daily attendance (ADA) of the school (the average number of students attending school during the year), many small school districts are unable to qualify for units. For example, if the state reimburses the school district for 20 special education units for every 3,000 pupils in their ADA, school districts with less than 3,000 ADA will not be able to qualify. The unit formula also discourages the establishment of new classes because it doesn't accommodate the extra expenses that occur during the first year of a new educational program, (e.g., cost of equipment, psychological testing, additional space, etc.).

Another problem with this type of financing is that it causes some children to be placed in classes that don't suit their needs. For example, an educational program for moderately retarded children is less expensive to operate than one for severely and profoundly retarded children. Therefore, some schools may place a severely retarded child in a class that costs less to run, even though it cannot provide the things that he needs.

Percentage Reimbursement

With this formula, *school districts are reimbursed for a partial or full percentage of all costs incurred in providing education for handicapped children*. When the state provides 100% of the excess cost to school districts, this type of reimbursement is adequate. However, if a percentage is used that is less than 100% of the excess cost, a local school district may be tempted to place a child in a program which is less expensive. In addition, this type of financing is often difficult to sell to legislators because it looks like an unlimited amount of money can be drawn from the state treasury.

Weighted Formula System

This means that *school districts are reimbursed for the regular cost per pupil multiplied by a factor which varies by the child's disability*. Using the weighted formula system, the state first determines what the average cost of educating a non-handicapped child is. This amount is then multiplied by a factor that is based on the additional amount of money it takes to educate a child with a certain disability. For example,

*Sister Marie Angele Thomas, "Finance: Without which there is no special education," Exceptional Children, (March, 1973).

some studies have indicated that it costs 2.73 times as much to educate a multiply handicapped child as it does to educate a non-handicapped pupil. So if a state wants to determine how much money to give in financial aid to a local school district for educating a multiply handicapped child, it multiples 2.73 times the amount of money it takes to educate a non-handicapped student.

Although this system is a more appropriate way of determining costs than the unit financing method, it still has some major drawbacks. If the multiplier is based on the average cost to educate students statewide, districts which have higher educational costs will not receive an equitable amount of reimbursement.

The weighted formula system does not take into account individual differences within disability categories. For example, some children who are multiply handicapped will require more services than the 2.73 factor would indicate. On the other hand, some may require less services.

Another problem with this system is that some states use the same multiplier for all the different types of disabilities. This discourages local school districts from beginning programs for children whose handicaps require more expensive programs.

Reimbursement for Personnel

Under this formula, *school districts are reimbursed for the cost of hiring professional personnel needed to serve handicapped children*. If this method is employed by a state, and no similar type of reimbursement is given for staff who work with non-handicapped children, school districts are likely to place children in special education classes who don't belong there. They may also make these classes larger to decrease the cost per pupil. Another weakness in this formula is that teachers are not the only added expense in the education of severely and profoundly retarded children. There are other necessary resources to pay for such as supplies, equipment, and transportation.

Straight Sum Reimbursmeent

School districts are given a set sum of money to educate each handicapped child in their district. This may encourage the school district to label children and place them in special education programs when it may be better for them to be mainstreamed.

This system also tends to encourage school districts to increase the size of special education classes. For example, if a school district gets $300 per mentally retarded child, and there are 15 mentally retarded children, the school district receives $4500. It is to their advantage to put all of the students in one classroom and hire only one teacher. There is no incentive to reduce the class size and hire two teachers.

Excess Cost Formula

The school district subtracts the cost of educating a non-handicapped child from the cost of educating a handicapped child. The state reimburses the school district for the excess cost. Under this formula, a school district is encouraged to place a child in the most appropriate setting if it is fully refunded for the excess costs. This is because an appropriate placement will not cost any more than an inappropriate one. However, if the state does not fully reimburse the school district for the excess cost, the same drawbacks can occur that exist in the percentage reimbursement system (i.e. placing children in less expensive programs).

Federal Aid

In addition to the money coming directly from the state treasury, a state education agency can now receive federal funds to help cover the extra costs of educating severely and profoundly retarded students under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142). This federal law authorizes a gradually increasing percentage of the *excess cost* of educating handicapped children to be paid for by the federal government. The amount will gradually increase until 1982, when the level of aid will be at the maximum figure of 40 percent.

Following is a schedule of the increases in financial aid that will be given to states under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act:

1978 — five percent
1979 — ten percent
1980 — twenty percent
1981 — thirty percent
1982 — forty percent

P.L. 94-142 requires each state education agency to pass along federal monies to the local school districts. In the first year of the formula system, 50% of the monies going to the states will be passed to the local school district. By 1979, 75% of the total allocation is to go to them. This is to remain a permanent arrangement after 1979.

Financing of school services is a complex matter. It might be helpful for your ARC to invite a member

of the local school district staff to explain how your state finances school programs. Following are some major questions you can ask (an affirmative answer is good):

	Yes	No
• Are provisions made for using either state or federal funds to pay for excess costs above those required for non-handicapped students?	____	____
• Are there provisions to reimburse local school districts for additional costs involved in beginning programs for severely and profoundly retarded students?	____	____
• Is the State Education Agency meeting requirements that are necessary to qualify for federal funds?	____	____

The Federal Government's Role in Education

Within the executive branch of the federal government is the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, which is directed by a cabinet level secretary. This person is appointed by the President with the consent of the Senate. The department is divided into several offices, one of which is the U.S. Office of Education (USOE). It is headed by a commissioner who is also an appointed official. Within the Office of Education, there are a number of bureaus. The bureau having the most influence over the education of handicapped children is the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH), which is managed by an Associate Commissioner of Education. The bureau is in turn divided into several divisions. The divisions are further divided into branches.

The USOE was founded in 1867; however, the federal government didn't play a significant role in education until the last several years. Traditionally, eduational services were left up to the state and local government. In fact, the U.S. Constitution does not mention education at all. However, the federal government has recently begun to take a more active role in education. The Bureau of Education for the Handicapped not only supports local educational programs, but also encourages research and teacher training efforts. Most of the university teacher training programs currently receive funds from BEH.

Recently the federal legislature passed the Education For All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142). The intent of this piece of legislation is to guarantee a free appropriate public education to all handicapped children. The funds distributed under this Act are administered by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped.

This law requires each handicapped child to have an educational program designed especially for him. It also calls for parents to have an active role in developing and approving this program. This law places the primary responsibility on the states to operate school programs to educate all of their handicapped children in the "least restrictive environment" possible (see Chapter 1 in Book II). As an incentive to the states for complying with this Act, funds have been appropriated to help cover part of the excess cost of educating handicapped children.

Following the passage of this Act, the states began massive efforts to find handicapped children. The major components of the "child find" systems implemented by the states are discussed in Book II. At the time of the writing of this booklet, child find efforts should have been completed and reports sent to the U.S. Commissioner of Education. These efforts should have located all handicapped children between the ages of 3 and 21 in need of special education services. The law places a priority on the expenditure of funds. The first priority is to children who have not been receiving a public education. The second priority is to children with the most severe handicaps who are not receiving an adequate eduation.

The SEA can refuse to pass federal monies along to a local school district when it does not conform to the overall state plan requiring full service. This means that if the local education agency isn't

doing the job of serving all handicapped children, the state can refuse to pass the federal money through to them.

The following is a summary of the major requirements* of this act.

- Assurance of extensive child find identification procedures;
- Assurance of "full service" goal and detailed time lines;
- A guarantee of complete due process procedure;
- The assurance of regular parent or guardian consultation;
- Maintenance of programs and procedures for comprehensive personnel development, including in-service training;
- Assurance of special education being provided for all handicapped children in the "least restrictive environment";
- Assurance of non-discriminatory testing and evaluation;
- A guarantee of policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality of data and information;
- Assurance of the maintenance of an individual educational program for all handicapped children;
- Assurance of an effective policy guaranteeing the right of all handicapped children to a free, appropriate public education, at no cost to parents or guardians;
- Assurance of a surrogate parent to act for any child when parents or guardian are either unknown or unavailable, or when a child is a legal ward of the state.

While the bill does authorize funds, Congress must still appropriate the money. This means that there is no real guarantee that all this money will be available to spend. Therefore, it becomes increasingly important that parents and educators inform their congressmen and senators of the importance of appropriating the monies authorized in P.L. 94-142.

As you will see, many of the provisions necessary for quality education of severely handicapped children are spelled out in this law. However, its passage is not the answer to all of the problems. Parents and educators must still assume the major role of seeing that the spirit of this law is carried out at the local level.

These were taken from a summary of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act done by Council for Exceptional Children

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

The passage of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act in 1974 and the publication of the regulations which will be utilized in its implementation mark a new milestone in spelling out the rights of students and parents.

This Act gives parents and students the right to examine records kept in the student's personal files. These files have long been used by teachers, administrators and guidance counselors to make educational decisions concerning children. Now parents have the right to examine these records and to become a partner in educational decision making. (It should be noted that this Act is applicable to all children — not just those who are handicapped.)

The major provisions of the Act include:

- ★ Parents have the right to inspect and review the educational records of their children. The school should respond to the request within a reasonable time, in no case more than 45 days after the request has been made.
- ★ Parents have a right to have records explained and interpreted by school officials.
- ★ Schools may not destroy any records if there is an outstanding request to inspect and review them.
- ★ Parents who believe that information contained in the education record of their child is inaccurate, misleading, or violates any rights of the child may request that the records be amended.
- ★ If the school decides the records should not be

amended, the parent shall be advised of the right to a hearing. The hearing shall —

- be held within a resonable period of time and the parents shall be given notice of the date, place and time;
- the hearing shall be conducted by a party who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing;
- the parent shall have the right to present evidence and be represented by individuals of his choice;
- the decision of the hearing shall be in writing; and
- the decision shall be based solely on evidence presented at the hearing.

★ Parent consent is required before the school can disclose personal information from education records to other agencies or individuals.

★ A log containing information regarding requests for records should be maintained in the students' files. This information can be inspected by parents.

University Teacher Training Programs and the Educational System

The major source of educational personnel for severely and profoundly retarded students is in universities that train teachers. Successful teacher training programs have traditionally worked closely with the public schools. Most of the student teacher's exposure to actual classroom programming comes through the practicum (student teaching and classroom observation) experience which is coordinated through the public schools. In order for this experience to be effective, university personnel need to be familiar with and be welcome in the local school setting.

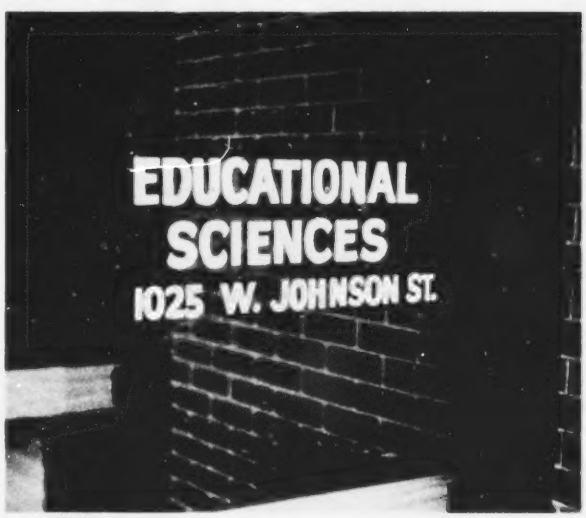
If an effective and coordinated effort is established, it can be beneficial to all involved: the school system, the training program, the teacher trainee, the parents, and, most importantly, the students. The school system benefits in that it can utilize the student teaching program to identify and recruit competent new teachers. It also has a resource of persons who can aid in the classroom — similar to competent volunteers — without additional cost to the district. Student teachers often bring with them the benefits of new teaching techniques, theories and knowledge that can be used in the classroom.

The student teacher also benefits from exposure to the public school. It is in student teaching and other practicum experiences that he gains first-hand knowledge of handicapped children. If this experience is begun early in the training program, by the end of the pre-service experience, undergraduate students have had as much as three years work with handicapped children.

The teacher training program also benefits from contact with the public school. Unless the university operates a demonstration program, the major source of practicums for its students will be in the public school. Of course, university personnel have to make an active effort to select competent supervisory teachers in the public schools. Otherwise the training that the student teachers receive will not be a helpful experience. The student teacher needs a good "model." In addition, the university personnel must maintain close contact with the public school training site. Frequent visits to the classroom in which the trainee is placed must be made.

Parents, as active advocates for their children, also benefit from this type of relationship. When the number of trained adults increases in the classroom, the quality of education for a given child should also increase. It should be remembered that when a student teacher is placed in a classroom, this does not relieve the regular classroom teacher of the responsibility of that class. What it should do is increase the number of people available to work with the children.

University programs usually maintain a formal relationship with state education agencies, which not only certify teachers, but also teacher training programs. If a state education agency approves a given teacher training program, graduates of that program usually receive certification automatically upon graduation.



Universities are also taking on responsibilities for other training activities. Many teacher training programs are presently in the in-service training business. This means that they train teachers who are already working. They also are becoming active in the training of paraprofessionals or teacher aides. In addition, speech, physical and occupational therapists, school psychologists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, etc. receive their training from universities. Recently, many university training programs have become active in the area of training parents and also in training teachers to work with parents.

Another way that the university training program influences the education of severely handicapped children is through its research efforts. Many of the advances currently employed in the education of handicapped children were brought about through university research, particularly advances in the use of behavior modification techniques in the classroom.

At the present time there are only a few university programs which have been in the business of actively training teachers of severely and profoundly handicapped students for any length of time. This number is rapidly increasing for several reasons. More severely handicapped children are entering public school programs, which has raised the need for qualified teachers. In addition, the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped has established as one of its priorities for funding the training of teachers for severely handicapped children.

The role of the university in the public school system is an important one. While the university is not formally involved in the education of severely and profoundly retarded children, the role that it does play is certainly a significant one.

The best way to evaluate the quality of a university teacher training program is to evaluate the quality of its product: the teacher. If he is competent, this reflects well on the training program.

What Is The Role of Teacher Unions?

Until recently, teachers have not been involved in any organized collective bargaining efforts. Prior to the "unionization" of the profession, educators banded together in local, state and national organizations designed to advocate for the rights of teachers. These organizations often effectively lobbied for their members. They sought to upgrade the quality of educational services by advocating for higher teacher salaries, fewer children per class, better physical facilities, freer choice in the selection of instructional material, etc.

In the early 1960's, teachers began active collective bargaining in a number of states. Disputes over wages, working conditions and other issues sometimes resulted in strikes. When schools are closed, everyone suffers. However, members of the unions felt that teachers did not have an equal voice in the schools.

In addition to advocating for the rights of teachers, unions have expressed interest in the students. Unions are currently lobbying for such things as early and continuing education, sabbatical leaves for teachers that provide them the opportunity to go back to school and upgrade their skills, and effective parent involvement.

While unions appear, at least on the surface, to be advocating for quality education, their effect on special education has not always been positive. It should be kept in mind that they are interested in all children. Handicapped children form only a small portion of this group. Their individual needs are often overlooked in the multitude of problems which surround education. Some unions have openly opposed "mainstreaming" on the basis that handicapped students place an undue burden on the already overtaxed regular classroom teacher.

What effect will unions have on the education of severely and profoundly retarded students? The answer to this question is not clear. If unions are effective in upgrading the quality of all educational services, severely and profoundly retarded children will benefit. If they lose sight of the needs of individual children, retarded students will obviously suffer. If teachers gain a voice in the operation of the school, but not complete control, benefits can be expected.

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